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RUEUITH/ODC ANKARA TU  
INFO RUEHTH/AMEMBASSY ATHENS 7347  
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RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 1712  
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SUBJECT: ANKARA MEDIA REACTION REPORT

FRIDAY, AUGUST 11, 2006

#### In Today's Papers

##### Britain Foils Terrorist Plot to Blow Up Planes

All papers give extensive front-page coverage to a major terrorist plot to blow up aircraft midair between Britain and the United States, a simultaneous attempt thwarted by British police Thursday morning. Twenty-four suspects, all of them Muslim British nationals have been arrested by British police. Turkish papers say the plot, thought to have been connected to al-Qaeda, was the worst terrorist threat since the September 11 attacks in the US. The terrorist plot has had an impact across global stock markets, including the Istanbul Stock Exchange. The Turkish Foreign Ministry (MFA) released a statement lauding the British security forces for their success in foiling a bloody attack. A commentary in Vatan says Turkey had earlier become the target of al-Qaeda attacks, and warns the country to prepare for new terrorist attempts.

##### Mottaki Visits Turkey

Sabah and Yeni Safak carry a report by the Iranian state-run news agency IRNA saying Iranian Foreign Minister Manuchehr Mottaki is to arrive in Istanbul on Friday to discuss with Turks the situation in Lebanon and Palestine as well as Tehran's nuclear activities. Mottaki is to meet with Foreign Minister Gul and Prime Minister Erdogan. Sabah says the request for Mottaki's visit came from the Iranians, and Foreign Minister Gul accepted it.

##### Turkey Seeks Broad Consensus before Kirkuk Referendum Next Year

Sabah, Zaman and Yeni Safak report Foreign Minister Abdullah Gul met with Iraqi Vice-President Tariq al-Hashimi and seven Sunni and Shiite Turkmen lawmakers in Istanbul yesterday. Gul told Hashimi and the Turkmen that the upcoming referendum on Kirkuk would not help solve the problems, and that a broader compromise was needed before holding the referendum next year. An unidentified Turkish official told Zaman Turkey was seeking special status for Kirkuk.

##### Zapsu Defends Ties with al-Qadi

All papers: Cuneyd Zapsu, former businessman who became advisor to Prime Minister Erdogan, responded to press questions regarding his ties with Yasin al-Qadi, the Saudi financier accused of sponsoring international terrorism. "The United States has been unfair to al-Qadi," Zapsu said, "Saudi Arabia has applied to the US, demanding al-Qadi be dropped from the list of terrorism sponsors, since no charges have been filed against him thus far." On his business ties with the Saudi businessman, Zapsu said besides al-Qadi, Merrill Lynch and Bank of America were partners in BIM Corp., a Turkish chain of supermarkets owned by the Zapsu family. "I came under heavy criticism for my partnership with al-Qadi, but no one ever asked my American partners Merrill Lynch and Bank of America anything. I wonder why," Zapsu emphasized.

Ministry Bans Loud Music in Bars after Midnight  
Hurriyet reports Turkish Environment Ministry said control of bars and restaurants along the Bosphorus causing noise pollution by playing high-volume music will be expanded to other major cities and coastal tourist towns. Earlier this week, the ministry had closed some bars in Istanbul playing extremely loud music, saying nearby residents complained that they could not sleep. Some opposition CHP lawmakers said noise pollution had been a pretext for the conservative ruling AK Party to close restaurants serving alcohol.

#### Editorial Commentary: Turkey and Israel; US Middle East Policy

Ibrahim Karagul argues in Islamist-oriented Yeni Safak that while officials condemn Israel's actions, Turkey's close economic and military ties with that country make the condemnations hypocritical: "As the second best friend of Israel, let us discuss Turkey's role in the US-Israel attacks against Lebanon. Why has the military

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partnership between Turkey and Israel never been questioned as the Israeli attacks on Lebanon are being criticized by the whole world, including Turkish public? Why it is not highlighted that Turkey continues to give full support to Israel in every way? While Israel is criticized in politicians' messages to the Turkish people, why has no one thought of canceling any of the military/security agreements with Israel? Why is no one questioning the Israeli electronic devices built on our borders, or our partnership in the missile defense project? Israeli pilots, who have been trained at Konya air base, are massacring civilians in Lebanon now. Were the military exercises by the US-Turkey-Israel in the east Mediterranean preparations for these attacks? Can someone explain the reason for Turkish Special Forces' presence in Lebanon, and tell me what kind of operations they are being used for? The truth is, Turkey has a role in the Israeli massacres in Lebanon, as well! Turkey is responsible too! While cursing Israel, we all are responsible for this massacre!"

Writing in the mainstream Milliyet, Taha Akyol says that Israeli militarism is "feeding terrorism": "Each time Condoleezza Rice heard comments about the US occupation of Iraq provoking terrorism, she reiterated that the US was neither in Iraq nor Afghanistan when terrorists attacked the twin towers on September 11. There is one fact that Secretary Rice either misses or wants to ignore: the US may not have been occupying Iraq and Afghanistan before September 11, but Israel was occupying East Jerusalem, the West Bank, the Gaza Strip and the Golan Heights, and was torturing people in these areas. And this occupation has fed today's insurgency, conflicts and terrorism. The Israeli military has been the winner of each war so far but they couldn't manage to handle organizations like Hamas and Hezbollah, using special war tactics. This is a historic chain, and the terror plot against the US that was thwarted in London yesterday, is one of the links in this chain. Israeli militarism is feeding terrorism once again by its cruelty in Lebanon. It is necessary to oppose Israeli militarism as well as Hezbollah and Hamas activities, otherwise terror attempts, like the one in Heathrow yesterday, unfortunately will continue."

TV Highlights  
NTV (8 a.m.)

## Domestic News

- Turkish Second Army Commander General Sukru Sariisik said PKK terrorism sponsored by the West and fundamentalist activities were main threats for Turkey. Sariisik is to become the commander of Aegean Army on August 30.
- King Abdullah said Turkey and Saudi Arabia should cooperate in developing new business projects, with Saudi businessmen planning to invest in Turkey in real estate and health sectors. Prime Minister Erdogan also invited Saudi businessmen to invest in Turkey.
- 100 members of the Human Rights Association (IHD), Amnesty International and the Association of Oppressed People gathered before the Lebanese Consulate General in Istanbul. The protestors held a 2-hour sit-in during which they condemned Israel for its human rights violations and massacres of civilians in Lebanon.
- The trial of Arslan Alparslan, the main suspect in the deadly Council of State shooting, and four of his accomplices begins today. The Prosecutor is demanding life sentences for Arslan and friends who are charged with attempting to undermine the constitutional order.
- The US-based international investment bank Merrill Lynch is in negotiations to buy Turkey's Tat Investment Bank at USD 6 million.

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## International News

- Israeli warplanes dropped leaflets over downtown Beirut on Thursday, warning residents of three southern suburbs to evacuate immediately.
- US State Department Spokesman Sean McCormack said Secretary Rice was looking for the right person to appoint as the special coordinator under the framework of the three-party mechanism to fight against the PKK.
- Iranian President Ahmadinejad said hatred of President Bush increased every day around the world.
- A suicide bomb attack near a Shiite shrine in the Iraqi city of Najaf killed 35 and wounded more than 50 others.
- Venezuelan opposition parties agreed to support a single candidate in an effort to challenge Hugo Chavez in December's presidential election.

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